

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on the Judiciary

Washington, DC 20515-6216
One Hundred Eighth Congress

February 10, 2003

The Honorable John D. Ashcroft
Attorney General of the United States
U.S. Department of Justice
10 th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

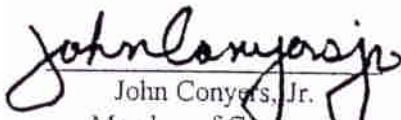
We write to express my profound disappointment about your Department's handling of anti-terrorism policy. Recent reports irrefutably indicate that the Department of Justice has been working on a successor bill to the "USA Patriot Act" for some time. Notwithstanding the Judiciary Committee's jurisdiction in this matter and outstanding record of dealing with this legislation, the Committee reported a bipartisan version of the Patriot Act by a unanimous vote, according to the Chairman's spokesman, there have been no consultations with the Committee on this bill.

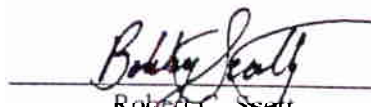
Your spokesperson, Barbara Comstock, claimed in a February 7 statement (attached) that the new draft bill was still in "internal deliberations" within the Department and still being discussed at "staff levels" and has not been "presented... to the White House." This is blatantly false in several respects, yet a Department of Justice "Control Sheet" (attached) plainly indicates that the bill was forwarded to the Speaker of the House and Vice President on January 10.

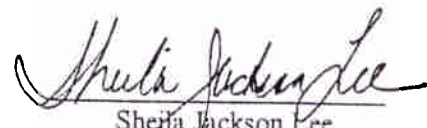
The Department's handling of this matter has only lent credence to suggestions that this Administration is intent on using the war on terrorism as a partisan political tool and the Justice Department is waiting to spring this bill on the Congress when the nation once again has endured a terrorist attack or is in the midst of war.

As Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee, and former Ranking Members of the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security, and the Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security and Claims, we request immediate consultations on this legislation. Please reply no later than February 15.

Sincerely,


John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress


Robert C. Scott
Member of Congress


Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable James Sensenbrenner, Chairman
The Honorable Jamie Brown, Acting Assistant Attorney General



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2003
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OPA
(202) 616-2777
TDD (202) 514-1888

STATEMENT OF BARBARA COMSTOCK,
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS:

"The President expects all his cabinet departments that are involved in homeland security, including the Department of Justice, to make sure we are doing everything we can to protect the American people. It should not be surprising that the Department of Justice takes that responsibility seriously and discusses additional tools to protect the American people. We are continually considering anti-terrorism measures and would be derelict if we were not doing so. The Department's deliberations are always undertaken with the strongest commitment to our Constitution and civil liberties.

"We are continually asking our field prosecutors, investigators and experts what tools they need to prevent future acts of terrorism. During our internal deliberations, many ideas are considered, some are discarded and new ideas emerge in the process along with numerous discussion drafts. Department staff have not presented any final proposals to either the Attorney General or the White House. It would be premature to speculate on any future decisions, particularly ideas or proposals that are still being discussed at staff levels."

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03-082

Department Of Justice
Office Legislative Affairs
Control Sheet

Date Of Document: 01/10/03
Date Received: 01/10/03
Due Date: 01/13/03 cob

Control No.: 030110-2762
ID No.: 415359

From: OLP (CONG. J. DENNIS HASTERT & VP RICHARD CHENEY)
(D.J.1384) ((108TH CONGRESS))

To: CONG. J. DENNIS HASTERT & VP RICHARD CHENEY

Subject:
ATTACHED FOR YOUR REVIEW AND COMMENT IS A DRAFT LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL
ENTITLED THE "DOMESTIC SECURITY ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2003"

Action/Information:

Signature Level: OLA

Referred To:

Assigned: Action:

CRM, FBI. ODAG, ASG, OLC, 01/10/03 COMMENTS DUE TO OLA/JONES BY COB
OIPR, INS, EOIR. CIV, 01/13/03. CC: OLP/C.HARRIS,
TAX (SEC. 423) OLA/KELLY/BELL/D.BURTON/DALEY/BLAKE

Remarks:

Comments:

File Comments:

Primary Contact: GREG JONES, 514-2113